GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5593
ANSWERED ON:02.05.2005
ILLEGAL BT. COTTON VARIETIES
Rao Shri Devarakonda Vittal

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the illegal varieties of Bt. Cotton are spreading at a fast rate;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the regulatory agencies are not showing any response to control the situation of penalize the offenders;

(d) if so, the reason therefor; and

(e) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to stop the spreading of illegal varieties of Bt. Cotton?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA):

(a) to (e) No Sir. However, there have been certain reports of production and supply of illegal Bt. Cotton seeds in some States, particularly in Gujarat and Tamifnadu. The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee in the Ministry of Environment & Forests and Department of Agriculture & Cooperation have advised all the Bt. Cotton growing States from time to time to take punitive action against producers, suppliers and venders of spurious Bt. Cotton seeds under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Seed Legislations. Besides, the Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur has been notified as referral lab. For detecting the presence/absence of Bt. Gene. As per information made available by the Department of Seed Certification, Tamilnadu, a laboratory has been established in the Directorate of Seed Certification, Coimbatore to test Cotton seed to analyse whether it contains illegal Bt. Gene. It has been intimated by the Government of Punjab, where Bt. Cotton varieties have been approved for cultivation during Kharif 2005, that they have issued strict instructions to all field functionaries to check and stop sale of any spurious seeds. They have also undertaken massive campaigns for educating farmers on the issue. The Government of Gujarat has intimated that they are taking all precautionary steps through its quality control mechanism to check any illegal sale of spurious Bt. Cotton seeds which includes directives to all District Collectors and a massive awareness programme for the farming community. Upto June, 2004, 61751 kgs. suspected Bt. Cotton seed were detained and action taken.